



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
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SEPTEMBER 12, 2002
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DORA, MO., MAN SENTENCED FOR DISTRIBUTING METH IN NATIONAL PARK

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a defendant convicted of distributing methamphetamine within the Mark Twain National Forest in Douglas County was sentenced in federal court today.

Michael R. Clinton, 41, of Dora, Mo., was sentenced this afternoon by U.S. District Judge Gary A. Fenner to 15 years and 1 month in prison without parole. On April 29, 2002, **Clinton** pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine and one count of carrying a firearm during and in relation to the conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine.

Clinton is one of four defendants charged in the 10-count superseding indictment that was returned on September 30, 2001, by a federal grand jury in Springfield. The indictment, Graves said, charges all four defendants with one count of conspiracy to distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine, alleging they schemed together to traffic the drug in Douglas County from an unknown date, but at least as early as May 2001, and continuing to the date of the indictment.

Graves explained that an investigation, which resulted in the indictment, was begun in the spring of 2001 after law enforcement received numerous complaints of drug trafficking activity occurring at the Hebron River Access Area on the North Fork River in Douglas County. The public area is within the jurisdiction and confines of the Mark Twain National Forest.

(MORE)

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Miguel Mendoza, 34, who resided in the Mark Twain National Forest during the period of the conspiracy, was also charged with three counts of distribution of methamphetamine, and one count of possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine. **Mendoza** was convicted on all five counts of the indictment by a federal jury in Springfield on March 14, 2002, after a four-day trial. **Mendoza** was sentenced to 30 years in prison without parole on each of the five counts, with those sentences to run concurrent with one another.

Kella A. Dobbs, 22, of Dora, Mo., who pleaded guilty, was sentenced to 3 years, 1 month in prison without parole on May 23, 2002.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David P. Rush. It was investigated by the South Central Missouri Drug Task Force, in cooperation with the Missouri State Highway Patrol and the U.S. Forest Service.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow